

The Elephant in the Room

George W. Bush has the lowest presidential approval rating in a generation, and the leading Dems beat every major '08 Republican. Coincidence?



Khue Bui for Newsweek

A Virtually Bush-Free Zone: The GOP debate in California on May 3

WEB EXCLUSIVE

By Marcus Mabry

Newsweek

Updated: 9:31 a.m. CT May 5, 2007

May 5, 2007 - It's hard to say which is worse news for Republicans: that George W. Bush now has the worst approval rating of an American president in a generation, or that he seems to be dragging every '08 Republican presidential candidate down with him. But According to the [new NEWSWEEK Poll](#), the public's approval of Bush has sunk to 28 percent, an all-time low for this president in our poll, and a point lower than Gallup recorded for his father at Bush Sr.'s nadir. The last president to be this unpopular was Jimmy Carter who also scored a 28 percent approval in 1979. This remarkably low rating seems to be casting a dark shadow over the GOP's chances for victory in '08. The NEWSWEEK Poll finds each of the leading Democratic contenders beating the Republican frontrunners in head-to-head matchups.

[Story continues below ↓](#)

advertisement

Learn how to protect your nest egg from harm

Don't put your financial future at risk. Download a new report by *Forbes* columnist and money manager, Ken Fisher, called **"The Eight Biggest Mistakes Investors Make And How To Avoid Them."** If you want to try and keep your nest egg safe, now is the time to get this must-read report. You'll be glad you acted!

[Click Here to Download Now!](#)



FISHER INVESTMENTS™

Perhaps that explains why Republican candidates, participating in their [first major debate](#) this week, mentioned Bush's name only once, but Ronald Reagan's 19 times. (The debate was held at Reagan's presidential library.)

When the NEWSWEEK Poll asked more than 1,000 adults on Wednesday and Thursday night (before and during the GOP debate) which president showed the greatest political courage—meaning being brave enough to make the right decisions for the country, even if it jeopardized his popularity—more respondents volunteered Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton (18 percent each) than any other president. Fourteen percent of adults named John F. Kennedy and 10 percent said Abraham Lincoln. Only four percent mentioned George W. Bush. (Then again, only five percent volunteered Franklin Roosevelt and only three percent said George Washington.)

A majority of Americans believe Bush is not politically courageous: 55 percent vs. 40 percent. And nearly two out of three Americans (62 percent) believe his recent actions in Iraq show he is "stubborn and unwilling to admit his mistakes," compared to 30 percent who say Bush's actions demonstrate that he is "willing to take political risks to do what's right."

[CONTINUED](#)

1 | [2](#) | [3](#) | [Next >](#)

EDITOR'S CHOICE

- Diets: Gina Kolata on 'Rethinking Thin'
- Can Statins Prevent Lung Cancer?
- Capitalizing on Pet-Food Panic
- Yikes! 40 Percent of Infants Watch TV Regularly
- Is TV Turning Tots into Crib Potatoes?

[Related Stories](#) | [What's this?](#)